MIND GAMES
JOHN LENNON
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Mind Games
Tight A$
Aisumasen (I'm Sorry)
One Day (At A Time)
Bring On The Lucie (Freda Peeple)
Nutopian International Anthem
Intuition
Out The Blue
Only People
I Know (I Know)
You Are Here
Meat City

Every year of John Lennon's adult life had seen upheaval of some sort. But 1973 – the year in which he would turn 33, and might have expected a little respite – turned out to be as traumatic as ever.

He entered it as a battle-weary radical, still inhabiting a small Greenwich Village apartment with Yoko Ono and still fighting the US authorities' apparent wish to deport him. He suspected a conspiracy and was not, as it turned out, paranoid. There really were larger political forces out to get him. He needed support, and many prominent Americans did in fact lend their voices to his cause. But his popular appeal had been dented, as he knew better than anyone, by the poorly-received double album of instant polemics, *Some Time In New York City*. This brave, carelessly outspoken Liverpudlian was used to being in trouble, but he was just as human as anyone else. It got him down.

In April, he and Yoko moved uptown to the Dakota Building, in search of some comfort

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and badly-needed privacy. An instinctive democrat, he was disappointed by the radical comrades, who were lamentably short of the popular touch. He also wanted to persuade the powers-that-be that he was not anti-American. They should have known that from every rock'n'roll song he ever sang.

Recording was done in New York over July and August of 1973, with a select band of musicians (jokingly named The Plastic U.F.Ono Band) including Jim Keltner, the guitarist David Spinozza and the celebrated pedal-steel player "Sneaky" Pete Kleinow. Production was by John alone, though there were echoes of his last collaborator, Phil Spector, in the spacious title track – even if its orchestral grandeur was, in fact, largely due to John's slide guitar.

'Mind Games', the track, reflected John's current interest in a book of that name (by Robert Masters and Jean Houston) which stressed the tapping of our mental potential to effect global change. Somewhat, therefore, in the tradition of Yoko's "Imagine" poems, it was suggesting "mind games" as a positive and creative idea. The soaring chorus lends a huge emotional heft: in fact the song had started life with the far more anthemic title 'Make Love Not War'. You may still hear these words at the fade.

Where 'Mind Games' rolls with a casual power, other tracks still pulse with raw thrill he'd felt when he hit the New York streets: 'Tight A$' and 'Meat City' are cynical and ebullient by turns, the songs of a witty artist who was also intensely hopeful.

The radical sentiments of *Some Time In New York City* were not entirely forgotten, though they assume a more abstract form in 'Bring On The Lucie (Freda Peeple)' – another epic number, targeting the near-defunct Richard Nixon presidency – and more especially the entirely silent 'Nutopian International Anthem'. Borderlines were anathema to John, in every sense, and a "Nutopia" free of visa laws must have sounded perfect.

Yet a retreat from political engagement towards more personal concerns is also evident, evidenced by 'One Day (At A Time)' and 'Only People', both of which temper idealism with a focus on individuals over organisations. And of course there are outright love songs, from the devotional 'Intuition', 'You Are Here' and 'Out The Blue' to further declarations of Lennon's penitence (à la 'Jealous Guy'), in 'Aisumasen (I'm Sorry)' and 'I Know (I Know)'. On the sleeve of Yoko's

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DECLARATION OF NUTOPIA

We announce the birth of a conceptual country, NUTOPIA.

Citizenship of the country can be obtained by declaration of your awareness of NUTOPIA.

NUTOPIA has no land, no boundries, no passports, only people.

NUTOPIA has no laws other than cosmic.

All people of NUTOPIA are ambassadors of the country.

As two ambassadors of NUTOPIA, we ask for diplomatic immunity and recognition in the United Nations of our country and its people.

John Ono Lennon
Yoko Ono Lennon

Nutopian Embassy
One White Street
New York, N.Y. 10013

April 1st, 1973

1971 album *Fly*, John had offered the thought, "Love is having to say you're sorry every five minutes." It's clear that the course of true love never did run smooth, not even for John Lennon and Yoko Ono.

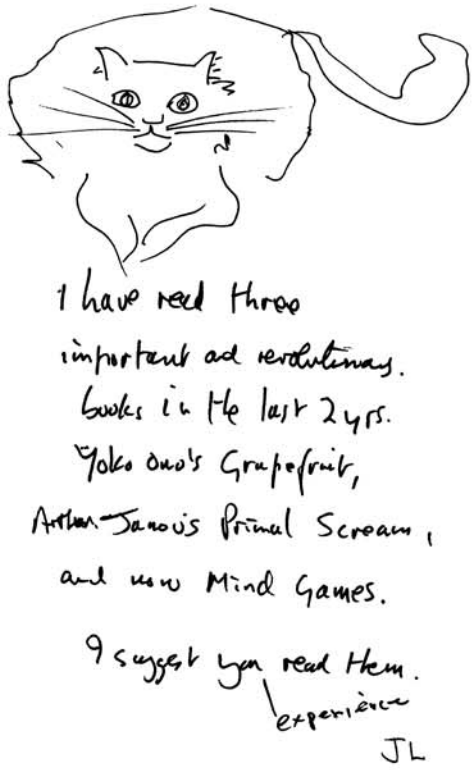
Mind Games was released in November of 1973 to a generally quiet response. John himself was at a loss, personally and professionally. What to do next?

Yoko Ono: "Well, when you listen to *Mind Games* now, you realize what an incredibly good album it is. I just felt terribly responsible about our partnership. His songs were fantastic but his position as the 'top pop star' was going down the drain."

At her insistence, he took time off from their marriage and his life in the Dakota.

"Yes. Because I really thought that we were being totally destructive about ourselves. It was not helping John. And it was not helping me. And we were artists who should have the space and the freedom to express ourselves without being hated."

At the onset of winter in 1973, the modern world's most famous lovers were now living on opposite coasts of America. As everyone eventually learned, John had a "Lost Weekend" to experience, and a further descent to make. Happily for us, neither of these would spell doom for Lennon's creative genius.



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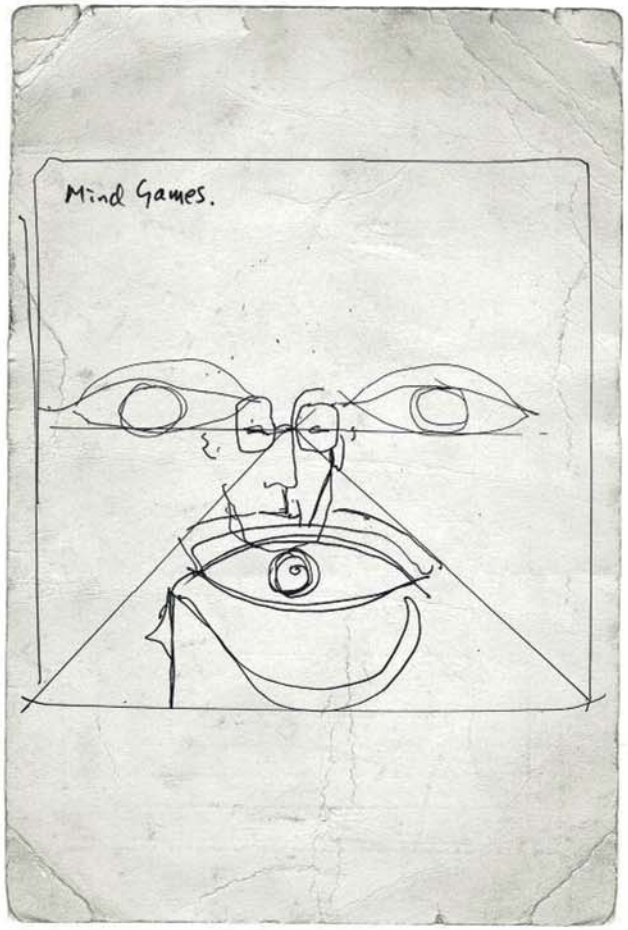

All songs Composed, Produced and Arranged by John Lennon

THE PLASTIC U.F.ONO BAND
Vocals: John Lennon. Piano, Organ, Mellotron: Ken Ascher. Guitar: David Spinozza. Bass: Gordon Edwards. Drums: Jim Keltner (plus Rick Marotta on 'Meat City' & 'Bring on The Lucie'). Sax: Michael Brecker. Pedal Steel: Sneaky Pete. Background Chorus: Something Different. Extra Sensory Percussion, Guitar, Clavinet: Dr. Winston O'Boogie & Los Paranoias. Engineers: Roy Cicala & Dan Barbiero. Mastering: Tom Rabstanek

Special Thanks To: Shelley, Jimmy, Greg, Kevin, May, Jon and all at 321.

Disease by Dennis. Space by Yoko Ono. Cover by John Lennon. Mountain from Bob Gruen. Recorded and Mastered at Record Plant, N.Y., N.Y. 1973

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Remaster Project Production
Producer: Yoko Ono.
Project Co-ordinator: Allan Rouse.
Remaster Engineers: Paul Hicks, Sean Magee. Audio Restoration: Simon Gibson. Remastered at Abbey Road Studios, London, England, 2010

Sleeve notes by Paul Du Noyer.
Additional Photography: Bob Gruen (© Bob Gruen/www.bobgruen.com).
Drawings by John Lennon

Art direction by Yoko Ono. Design by Peacock. Artwork Co-ordinator: Karla Merrifield. Photo research: Xilonen Oreshnick. Project management by Timothy Ryan, Jane Ventom, Kris Perera and Guy Hayden

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